



Early Journal Content on JSTOR, Free to Anyone in the World

This article is one of nearly 500,000 scholarly works digitized and made freely available to everyone in the world by JSTOR.

Known as the Early Journal Content, this set of works include research articles, news, letters, and other writings published in more than 200 of the oldest leading academic journals. The works date from the mid-seventeenth to the early twentieth centuries.

We encourage people to read and share the Early Journal Content openly and to tell others that this resource exists. People may post this content online or redistribute in any way for non-commercial purposes.

Read more about Early Journal Content at <http://about.jstor.org/participate-jstor/individuals/early-journal-content>.

JSTOR is a digital library of academic journals, books, and primary source objects. JSTOR helps people discover, use, and build upon a wide range of content through a powerful research and teaching platform, and preserves this content for future generations. JSTOR is part of ITHAKA, a not-for-profit organization that also includes Ithaka S+R and Portico. For more information about JSTOR, please contact support@jstor.org.

THE SPIRITUAL SIGNIFICANCE OF COLOR.

THE fact seems to be that strength of religious feeling is capable of supplying for itself whatever is wanting in the rudest suggestions of Art, and will either, on the one hand, purify what is coarse into inoffensiveness, or, on the other, raise what is feeble into impressiveness. Probably all Art, as such, is unsatisfactory to it; and the effort which it makes to supply the void will be induced rather by association and accident than by the real merit of the work submitted to it. The likeness to a beloved friend, the correspondence with a habitual conception, the freedom from any strange or offensive particularity, and, above all, an interesting choice of incident, will win admiration for a picture where the noblest efforts of religious imagination would otherwise fail of power. How much more when, to the quick capacity of emotion, is joined a childish trust, that the picture does, indeed, represent a fact. It matters little whether the fact be well or ill told; the moment we believe the picture to be true, we complain little of its being ill-painted. Let it be considered for a moment, whether the child, with its colored print, inquiring eagerly and gravely, which is Joseph, and which is Benjamin, is not more capable of receiving a strong, even a sublime, impression from the rude symbol which it invests with reality by its own effort, than the connoisseur who admires the grouping of the three figures in Raphael's "Telling of the Dreams;" and whether, also, when the human mind is in its right religious tone, it has not always this childish power—I speak advisedly, this power—a noble one, and possessed more in youth than at any period of after life, but always, I think, restored in a measure by religion—of raising into sublimity and reality the rudest symbols which is given to it of accredited truth. * * *

It is impossible to calculate the enormous loss of power in modern days, owing to the imperative requirement that Art shall be methodical and learned: for, as long as the constitution of this world remains unaltered, there will be more intellect in it than there can be education; there will be many men capable of just sensation and vivid invention, who never will have time to cultivate or polish their natural powers. And all unpolished power is, in the present state of society, lost; in other things as well as in the Arts, but in the Arts especially—nay, in nine cases out of ten, people mistake the polish for the power. Until a man has passed through a course of academy studentship, and can draw in an approved manner with French chalk, and knows foreshortenings and perspective, and something of anatomy, we do not think he can possibly be an artist; what is worse, we are very apt to think we can make him an artist by teaching him anatomy, and how to draw with French chalk; whereas, the real gift in him is utterly independent of all such accomplishments; and I believe there are many peasants on every estate, and laborers in every town of Europe, who have imaginative powers of a high order, which, nevertheless, cannot be used for our good, because we do not choose to look at anything but what is expressed in a legal and scientific way. I believe there is many a village mason, who, set to carve on a series of Scripture or any other histories, would find many a strange and noble fancy in his head, and set it down roughly enough indeed, but in a way well worth having. But, we are too grand to let him do this, or to set up his clumsy work when it is done; and, accordingly, the poor stone mason is kept hewing stones smooth at the corners, and we build our church of the smooth square stones, and consider ourselves wise.

These are no singular instances. I know no law more severely without exception than this of the connexion of pure color with profound and noble thought. The late Flemish pictures,

shallow in conception and obscure in subject, are always sober in color. But, the early religious painting of the Flemings is as brilliant in hue as it is holy in thought. The Bellinis, Francias, Peruginos, painted in crimson, in blue, and gold. The Caraccis, Guidos, and Rembrandts, in brown and grey. The builders of our cathedrals veiled their casements and wrapped their pillars with one robe of purple splendor. The builders of the luxurious Renaissance lift their palaces, filled only with cold white light, in the paleness of their native stone. Nor does it seem difficult to discern a noble reason for this universal law. In that heavenly circle which binds the statutes of color upon the front of the sky, when it became the sign of the covenant of peace, the pure hues of divided light were sanctified to the human heart forever; nor this, it would seem, by mere arbitrary appointment, but in consequence of the fore-ordained and marvellous constitution of those hues into a seven-fold, or, more strictly still, a three-fold order, typical of the Divine nature itself.

Observe, also, the name of Shem, or splendor, given to that son of Noah in whom this covenant of mankind was to be fulfilled, and see how that name was justified by every one of the Asiatic races which descended from him. Not without meaning was the love of Israel to his chosen son expressed by the coat "of many colors;" not without deep sense of the sacredness of that symbol of purity, did the lost daughter of David tear it from her breast: "With such robes were the king's daughters that were virgins apparelled." We know it to have been Divine command, that the Israelite, rescued from servitude, veiled the tabernacle with its rain of purple and scarlet, while the under sunshine flashed through the fall of the color from its tenons of gold; but was it less by Divine guidance that the Mede, as he struggled out of anarchy, encompassed his king with the sevenfold burning of the battlement of Ecbatana—of which one circle was golden like the sun, and another silver like the moon; and then came the great sacred chord of color, blue, purple, and scarlet; and then a circle white like the day, and another dark like the night; so that the city rose like a great mural rainbow, a sign of peace amidst the contending of lawless races, and guarded with color and shadow, that seemed to symbolize the great order which rules over Days, and Nights, and Time, the first organization of the mighty statutes—the law of the Medes and Persians which altereth not. Let us now dream it is owing to the accidents of tradition or education that those races possess the supremacy over color which has always been felt, though but lately acknowledged among men. However their dominion might be broken, their virtue extinguished, or their religion defiled, they retained alike the instinct and the power; the instinct which made even their idolatry more glorious than that of others, bursting forth in fire-worship from pyramid, cave, and mountain, taking the stars for the rulers of its fortune, and the sun for the God of its life; the power which so dazzled and subdued the rough crusader into forgetfulness of sorrow and of shame, that Europe put on the splendor which she had learned of the Saracen, as her sackcloth of mourning for what she suffered from his sword; the power which she confesses to this day, in the utmost thoughtlessness of her pride, or her beauty, as it treads the costly carpet, or veils itself with the variegated Cashmere; and in the emulation of the concourse of her workmen, who, but a few months back, perceived, or at least admitted, for the first time, the preëminence which has been determined from the birth of mankind, and on whose charter Nature herself has set a mysterious seal, granting to the Western races, descended from that son of Noah whose name was Extension, the treasures

of the sullen rocks, and stubborn ore, and gnarled forest, which were to accomplish their destiny across all distance of earth and depth of sea, while she matured the jewel in the sand, and rounded the pearl in the shell, to adorn the diadem of him whose name was Splendor. And observe farther, how in the Oriental mind a peculiar seriousness is associated with this attribute of the love of color; a seriousness rising out of repose, and out of the depth and breadth of the imagination, as contrasted with activity, and consequent capability of surprise, and of laughter, characteristic of the Western mind; as a man on a journey must look to his steps always, and view things as narrowly and quickly; while one at rest may command a wider view, though an unchanging one, from which the pleasure he receives must be one of contemplation, rather than of amusement or surprise. Wherever the pure Oriental spirit manifests itself definitely, I believe its work is serious; and the meeting of the influences of the Eastern and Western races is, perhaps, marked in Europe more by the dying away of the grotesque laughter of the Goth than by any other sign.

I shall have more to say on this head in other places of this volume; but the point I wish at present to impress upon the reader is, that the bright hues of the early architecture of Venice were no sign of gaiety of heart, and that the investiture with the mantle of many colors by which she is known, above all other cities of Italy and of Europe, was not granted to her in the fever of her festivity, but in the solemnity of her early and earnest religion. She became in after times the revel of the earth, the masque of Italy; and, therefore, is she now desolate; but her glorious robe of gold and purple was given her when first she rose a vestal from the sea, not when she became drunk with the wine of her fornication.

There is no subject more melancholy, more wonderful, than the way in which God permits so often His best gifts to be trodden under foot of men, His richest treasures to be wasted by the moth, and the mightiest influences of His spirit, given but once in the world's history, to be quenched and shortened miseries of chance and guilt. I do not wonder at what men suffer, but I wonder at what they lose. We may see how good rises out of pain and evil; but the dead, naked, eyeless loss, what good comes of that? The fruit struck to the earth before its ripeness, the glowing life and goodly purpose dissolved away in sudden death; the words, half spoken, choked upon the lips with clay for ever; or, stranger than all, the whole majesty of humanity raised to its fullness, and every gift and power necessary for a given purpose, at a given moment, centered in one man, and all this perfected blessing permitted to be refused, perverted, crushed, cast aside by those who need it most—the city which is not set on a hill, the candle that giveth light to none that are in the house—these are the heaviest mysteries of this strange world, and it seems to me, those which mark its curse the most. And it is true, that the power with which this Venice has been intrusted, was perverted, when at its highest, in a thousand miserable ways: still it was possessed by her alone; to her all hearts have turned which could be moved by its manifestation, and none without being made stronger and nobler by what her hand had wrought. The mighty landscape of dark mountains that guard the horizon with their purple towers, and solemn forests, that gather their weight of leaves, bronzed with sunshine, not with age, into those gloomy masses fixed in heaven, which storm and frost have power no more to shake, or shed;—that mighty humanity, so perfect and so proud, that hides no weakness beneath the mantle, and gains no greatness from the diadem; the majesty of thoughtful form, on which the dust of gold and flame of jewels are dashed

as the sea-spray upon the rocks, and still the great manhood seems to stand bare against the blue sky; that mighty mythology, which fills the daily walks of men with spiritual companionship, and beholds the protecting angels break with their burning presence through the arrow flights of battle;—measure the compass of that field of creation, weigh the value of the inheritance that Venice thus left to the nations of Europe, and then judge if so vast, so beneficent a power could indeed have been rooted in dissipation or decay. It was when she wore the ephod of the priest, not the motley of the masquer, that the fire fell upon her from heaven; and she saw the first rays of it through the rain of her own tears; when, as the barbaric deluge ebbed from the hills of Italy, the circuit of her palaces, and the orb of her fortunes, rose together like the iris, painted upon the cloud.—*Stones of Venice.*

AN ARAB EMIR.—The space of ground occupied by the tent of an Arab Emir is nearly a hundred yards in length. From the centre rises conspicuously the awning, which covers the rooms more immediately set apart for himself and his family, surmounted by a glittering gilt ball, out of which rises a spear's head with pendant horse tails. The guest room, which is at the farthest extremity of the tent, is laid down with Persian carpets of the richest manufacture; along three of its sides runs a divan, the seating and cushions of which are made of the softest wool, curiously wrought into a variety of patterns, and expressly made for a thickness and durability calculated to stand the wear and tear of continual removals. The rest of the tent is partitioned off into divisions for the reception of the various stores of corn, rice, barley, oil, butter, &c., in which consists the Emir's wealth and consideration. Around him, as far as his eye can reach, rove his flocks of sheep and camels, accompanied by groups of thorough-bred mares and horses, the latter occasionally bestriden by perfect infants, gambolling on the bare backs of those wild and tractable animals, which seem, as it were, to return the caresses of their innocent playmates, and to acknowledge a mutual charge, by the gentleness of their paces and the docility of their movements; but which, when a stronger hand reins them in, and urges their course, suddenly display the fire and indomitable energies of their nature, pawing in the valley and rejoicing in their strength. Then does this gentle Arab steed become beautiful in his greatness and "the glory of his nostrils is terrible." As the shades of evening close in, the wanderers, in gradually lessening circles, approach the patriarchal tent, and every nightfall brings along with it those various incidents of pastoral life, that make even its very monotony a continual round of fresh-recurring and pleasurable emotions, which the Arab would not barter for the pomp and glitter and richness of an empire. Amidst the bleating of his flocks, the neighing of his steeds, the lowing of his herds, and tinkling of his camel bells, the Arab Emir wakes from his slumber, and spreading his carpet, sits in the door of his tent, surrounded by his children, his slaves, and the principal members of his tribe. The dew covered plains sparkle before him like a spangled robe; the morning breezes impart a cooling, a delicious fragrance to all around; a still and melodious harmony seems to reign over the boundless tracts which melt away into the horizon; and, child of Nature by his wants, sympathies, and tastes, he knows no joys but what she affords, and appreciates no gifts but what she imparts. Every hour taken from such exhilarating moments as these, except, perhaps, the more stirring periods of a distant foray, when he leads out his tribe in search of a disputed pasture, or in retaliation for wrongs incurred, is one of unmitigated disgust.—*Colonel Churchill.*

Correspondence.

NORTH CONWAY, August 20, 1855.

MESSRS. EDITORS.—To one who is fluent in description of scenery, there is enough here to invest a word picture with sufficient interest, perhaps even to engage the attention of indifferent readers, but for me, who have no tact in that direction, the attempt seems to be little less than presumptuous. Principally, perhaps, because I cannot exaggerate, for nearly all the description that I have ever seen adapted to the popular ear, has owed its attractiveness chiefly to this characteristic. The region of the White Mountains is justly famed for its impressive scenery; passages of the sublime and beautiful are not unfrequent, and for those who have the physical strength and mental energy to confront the former among the deep chasms and frowning precipices, I doubt not it would be difficult to exaggerate, and the simple truth would be sufficient to convey the full idea of "boundless power and inaccessible majesty," represented by such scenes. But to one like myself, unqualified to penetrate the "untrodden ways" of the latter, the beautiful aspect of the White Mountain scenery is by far the predominant feature. In this respect, this locality (North Conway) possesses advantages probably unequalled by any other, both for its immediate prospects and for the convenience of excursions in the vicinity, introducing new and still new beauties for many miles around. It has not been, as yet, my privilege to enjoy many such excursions, nor have I sought it; there is enough immediately before me for present attention. Mount Washington, the leading feature of the scene when the weather is fine, a circumstance too rare, rises in all his majesty, and with his co-temporary patriots, Adams, Jefferson, Munroe, &c., bounds the view at the North. On either hand, subordinate mountains and ledges slope, or abruptly descend to the fertile plain that borders the Saco, stretching many miles southward, rich in varying tints of green fields and meadows, and beautifully interspersed with groves and scattered trees of graceful form and deepest verdure: rocks glitter in the sunshine among the dark forests that clothe the greater portion of the surrounding elevations; farmhouses peep out amidst the rich foliage below, and winding roads, with their warm-colored lines, aided by patches of richly tinted earth break up the monotony, if monotony it can be called, where every possible shade of green is harmoniously mingled. I have seen no scenery in this country presenting so great a variety in color. The bare summits of the higher mountains in sunny warmth, contrast beautifully with the purplish blue and russet hues that graduate from midway down their vast slopes to their forest bases, and the patches of cultivation which seldom venture but a short way up their sides, are rarely offensive through formality of outline, being always agreeably tinted with various colors.

Such are the more obvious features of this locality, but these are not all. An irregular strip of table-land, skirting the bases of the eastern hills, including Mt. Kearsarge, lifts you from fifty to a hundred feet above the bed of the Saco. On this table-land the village of North Conway

is situated, and there the public road passes. In approaching the rich meadows which border the river, you descend a steep bank mostly studded with trees, but occasionally presenting a declivity of loose sand not unlike the ashy slope of Vesuvius, out of which often shoot up the shining stems of the white birch mingled with the drooping elm, and suddenly at the base you are surprised with the gleam of a crystal streamlet winding its way among alders and overhanging trees of various kinds, birch, elm, and maple, to mingle with the Saco. On these streams, and there are a number, the artist finds a variety of delicious "bits;" now the luxurious fern and wild flowery plants choke up the passage of the waters, and now masses of mossy rock and tangled roots diversify the banks, and miniature falls and sparkling rapids refresh the Art-student, and nourish the dainty trout. Along these streams at all reasonable times, you are sure to see the white umbrella staring amidst the foliage. I meet these signals of the toiling artist every day, and never without experiencing an internal struggle—a mental conflict. I have a predilection for such secluded recesses of quiet beauty, and many have I found near home, but I am here some three hundred and fifty miles away in search of mountain scenes and passages of middle grounds—the larger and more imposing feature of landscape—and yet I find myself like Garrick, between tragedy and comedy, not knowing which to choose. However, unless the elements soon become more auspicious, I shall yield to the lesser charm, and sit down with my "traps" in the "cool sequestered vale," for I have battled with the clouds and rains for the last fortnight to little purpose. Just as I commence my study of the mountains, they are veiled and disappear, and I wait another and another day in hope, till "hope deferred maketh the heart sick." But the clouds do not descend to the valleys, they hide not the secluded stream, and the trees continue in their unveiled charms, lovely in shade as in sunshine, happy as it were in their humility.

Previous to coming here, I had heard much of the facilities in trout-fishing appertaining to this vicinity, and being accustomed to resort occasionally by way of exercise to that occupation during intervals of weather unfavorable for my professional studies, I came with prepossessing anticipation in that direction; but on special inquiry, I found that rumor had somewhat exaggerated such facilities, and it proved, as on other occasions within my recollection, that the really good trouting places were some miles distant. And thus I have almost always found it, go where you will for trout, the best fishing is always some seven or ten miles further off. I have not yet been able to obtain specific directions where to find these desirable localities, although accompanied by a friend much better versed in the science than myself, he having had the honor to fish in company, and under the directions of the celebrated Angler of the "Wilderness and its Waters."

Respectfully yours,

A. B. Burand

HORACE VERNET has started from Marseilles for a vigorous campaign in Algiers—now confessedly his undisputed kingdom of Art.—*Athenaeum.*